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AUTHOR Turner, William L.
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ABSTRACT

The CEU (continuing education unit) appears to be fulfilling a long term need of the individual learner, the college and university, the professional society, the licensing board, the accrediting organization, the employer, and many other groups. It was established by a national task force from the National University Extension Association following a national planning conference and may be used in a variety of ways: measurement, recording, and verification of adult participation in programs, among others. Administrative concerns regarding the CEU focus on the number of units to be granted, the educational merit of the program, the evaluation of the participant's performance in the program, and the maintenance of relevant records. There are many possible applications of the CEU, and some areas in which its application is not appropriate. Discrimination in its use must be employed. Implementation of the CEU was facilitated by its adoption by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in December 1971. The association has developed guidelines for use and implementation of the CEU for institutional membership. Large potential users of the CEU are professional societies and associations, business, industry, labor, and government. (AG)

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A STATEMENT
on the
PHILOSOPHY, DEVELOPMENT, AND ADOPTION
of the
CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

By

William L. Turner
Vice Chancellor for Extension and Public Service
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Springfield, Illinois
September 19, 1974

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Members of the Convention and Honored Guests:

I have been asked to speak to you this afternoon about the history and philosophy of the CEU or continuing education unit. This is no small undertaking because the CEU appears to be gaining regional and national recognition and acceptance as the standard unit of measurement for continuing education and its history and development is becoming rather lengthy.

Before I get into my subject, I would like to take this opportunity to express to you the appreciation of the National Task Force and my personal appreciation as chairman of the National Task Force to the Illinois Community College Board--you are taking a leadership role in the further development, use, and implementation of the CEU. Credit for this action to date rests with the continuing education leadership here in the State of Illinois.

Let's examine together why the CEU appears to be fulfilling a long term need of the individual learner, the college and university, the professional society, the licensing board, the accrediting organization, the employer, and many other groups in our society today who have an interest in this subject.

We are living in a period of rapid change. The explosion of technology has severly tested the capability of most institutions of higher learning to keep individuals updated in the various professions. The need for continuous updating and other forms of self-renewal has become a concern for individuals and employers of personnel at all levels of skill, whether publicly or privately engaged.

There is a great need today for the professional, the skilled worker or technician and the general adult to be able to bring to bear a new enlightenment upon the broad social, economic and technical problems of the day.

Parallel with the need for an individual to remain abreast of the sweeping changes affecting his job and his skills is the need fir continuing education--education that requires the individual's formal education to be continued throughout a lifetime.

There has been a marked increase in the variety and multiplicity of informal educational channels by which an individual may further his knowledge. Short courses, conferences, institutes, seminars and correspondence study have bene some of the primary non-credit or informal instructional forms created to satisfy the needs of the individual. The forms of instruction have had no uniform duration,

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timing or unit of measurement, nor have they always been sharply targeted to the population.

Equally frustrating has been the fact that too little recognition is given participants--whether students or instructors--in continuing education programs. Meaningful check points and career goals comparable to the established degrees and professional licenses are lacking in the variety of extension and continuing education offerings presently available to the individual.

Until recently, there had been no adequate means of measuring the amount of non-credit activity, except in terms of the number of individuals participating in such activities, or the academic level of such activities, except to the extent that elementary, secondary or higher educational institutions may have administered the programs.

Right now, our nation's employers have many millions of professional level employees and have special needs for measuring educational activities, not only for hiring purposes but also for promotional criteria.

In July of 1968, a national planning converence was called in Washington, D. C. to measure the interest of some 34 national organizations in developing a uniform unit of measurement for non-credit continuing education. The conference was sponsored jointly by the National University Extension Association, AACRAO, the U. S. Civil Service Commission and the U. S. Office of Education. The 34 national organizations represented at the conference were known previously to have expressed an interest in one aspect or another of identifying, measuring and recognizing individual effort in continuing education.

On the basis of interest expressed at the national planning conference, a National Task Force from the National University Extension Association was appointed to determine the feasibility of a uniform unit of measurement and to develop a proposal for field testing and gaining general acceptance of this concept. I was appointed chairman of this national task force.

The task force was aware of the fact that adult education enrollment was increasing dramatically across the United States. The Johnstone study released in the mid 1960's, for example, indicated that more than 25 million Americans exclusive of full-time regular students, were engaged in at least one educational program annually. It has further been projected that non-credit adult and

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continuing education programs will become a major component of American education during the seventies and eighties.

Not long ago, Robert Sarnoff, Chairman of the Board of R. C. A., stated in a speech that, "every professional employee would be participating in continuing education between one day and three months before 1980." The Dean of a leading engineering school told his graduating class that "in order to stay abreast of technological changes and to keep professionally updated in your field, you will find it necessary to return to school for short periods of training within three to five years."

The need for a uniform unit to measure continuing education developed as a result of an increase in knowledge and technology. The demand for retraining activities is reflected in the constant increase in participation in continuing education and also in the number of institutions and organizations offering similar programs.

The National Task Force was also aware of the fact that several organizations and institutions were starting or studying a system of measurement and awards, each having little or no relationship to any other system in being. A uniform nationally accepted unit would help reduce the confusion and fragmentation in arriving at a suitable means of recognizing and rewarding individual effort in the pursuit of continuing education.

The needs that I have related to you resulted in the establishment of the Continuing Education Unit by the National Task Force.

Now let us look at the Continuing Education Unit and its place in our education system.

The National Task Force defined the CEU as follows:

Ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction and qualified instruction.

This unit represents a sufficiently small amount of participation in continuing education so that it will be possible for an individual to accumulate a substantial number of such units over limited periods of time. The CEU has the

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further advantage of being computed simply for all formats and durations of continuing education programming wherever contact hours or their equivalent can be determined. Partial units may be recorded as necessary by taking advantage of the decimal nature of the system of measurement. For example, twelve contact hours of participation can be recorded as 1.2 CEU's.

The Continuing Education Unit or CEU may be used for the measurement, recording, reporting accumulation, transfer and recognition of participation by adults in programs which seldom in the past have been recorded in a systematic way or with any sense of permanence, significance or transferability.

The CEU can be applied with equal facility to professional continuing education, vocational retraining and adult liberal education as well as all other programs in adult and continuing education.

Some specific objectives which the application of the continuing education unit will fulfill are:

1. It will systematize the recording and reporting system for partipation in non-credit continuing education.
2. It will provide a uniform system for accumulating quantitative data on participation in continuing education activities.
3. It will permit the accumulation, updating and transfer of the continuing education record of an individual participant.
4. It will encourage long-range educational goals and lifelong learning as a process of continuing education.
5. It will make the pursuit of knowledge more attractive as a way of personal and professional development.

And . . . . . .

6. It will permit and encourage the typical adult student to marshall and utilize a host of continuing education resources to serve his particular needs.

Now, for just a moment, let us look at the administrative process for determination of the number of CEU's to be awarded in a particular continuing education experience.

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The determination of the number of CEU's to be awarded is the responsibility of the director of extension or continuing education or the director of training, based on the recommendation of the program director immediately responsible for the learning activity.

The number of units will be determined by considering the number of contact hours in a formal learning situation and evaluating any other experiences connected with the program. Reasonable allowances may be made for activities such as required reports, laboratory assignments, field trips, and supervised study.

The following questions must be answered in the affirmative before consideration can be given to awarding units.

1. Does the program meet the requirements of being an organized continuing education experience?
2. Does the program have qualified instruction and direction to assure that the educational objectives will be fulfilled?
3. Will a record of the units awarded be of value to the participants?

In the administrative process of awarding CEU's there are several standards which must be met in continuing education activities.

First, the program director should request and receive the approval of the appropriate administrative officer in his institution to award a specified number of CE units for a program prior to the time it is offered.

Second, upon completion of the learning experience, the program director should certify that the program has been completed in a satisfactory manner by each individual for whom units are approved and he should report the appropriate information for each participant earning units to be placed on record with the sponsoring institution or organization.

Finally, by virtue of awarding CE units, the sponsoring institution or organization also accepts responsibility for establishing and maintaining a permanent record of all such units awarded. Records should be available on a permanent basis, whether by individual or by continuing education activity and such records may be expected to be queried from time to time by the so-called "user sector" of continuing education.

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The information to be recorded include:

1. Name of individual student
2. Social security number of individual student
3. Title of course or program
4. Course description and comparative level at which offered, if not clear from the title.
5. Starting and ending dates of activity
6. Location of program
7. Format of program

And . . . . .

8. The number of continuing education units awarded.

In addition to the above information, additional information may be recorded on an optional basis.

1. Evaluation of individual performance, if available
2. Name of instructor or course director
3. Personal information about the student such as address, date of birth, educational background, and employment
4. Cooperating sponsor (company, association, agency or institution)
5. Courses may be classified as to type such as professional, liberal education, vocational-technical, job entry, and in-service. Indication of level with respect to the general content, such as introductory, intermediate or advanced might also be useful.

It would seem at this time appropriate to make mention of some of the applications of the continuing education unit. Keep in mind that these are merely illustrations and are not to be considered as limitations.

Some of the applications include:

Non-credit intensive courses or programs in technical and professional areas.

Training programs on new techniques or in technical areas.

Programs to be used in partial fulfillment of certificate or licensing requirements

Programs sponsored by technical or industrial societies through universities designed to upgrade members in occupation or technical areas.

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Liberal education courses or workshops for the general public.
Paraprofessional or subprofessional training programs.
And vocational training programs.

Again, these are just some of the applications for which the continuing education unit will be appropriate. I am sure there are other areas.

Since we have detailed some of the areas where the CEU is appropriate, let me list a few areas at the opposite end of the rainbow where CEU's should not be awarded.

Some of these programs include:

Any program carrying academic credit, whether secondary or collegiate.
Programs leading to high school equivalency certificates or diplomas.
Orientation programs concerning in-plant or job
And, finally, short duration programs only casually related to any specific upgrading purpose or goal.

It should become the policy of all proponents of continuing education to encourage rofessional societies, certifying agencies, recruitment and placement activities, employers, personnel managers, counsellors, licensing boards and similar individuals and organizations to establish standards and incentives for personal and professional development.

Such standards and incentives should be in terms of continuing education units to be acquired over a given period of time for particular forms of reward and recognition.

Being open ended, the incentives make continuing education a life-long quest, both for individuals and for user groups. Each user group will establish and regulate its own requirements for the maintenance of proficiency in the particular clientele field over which it has purview or jurisdiction.

The key to the success and usefulness of the CEU will be found in its discriminating use. While the CEU is basically a quantifying mechanism, the administrative process with which it is implemented can and should provide the quality control factors to make the CEU a meaningful measurement.

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It is stressed that the system of recording units of continuing education participants may be related to the current system of permanent records in use at the institution or a separate and parallel system can be designed and maintained. Reference should be made again, however, to the elements found in the definition of the CEU--an organized continuing education experience; under responsible leadership; capable direction and qualified instruction.

It is further emphasized that the number of CEU's for each offering should be determined in advance through the regular channels of the administrative unit responsible for the coordination of such non-credit activities and in cooperation with the appropriate departments of the institution or organization.

In the last few minutes, I have given you a quick summary of the continuing education unit and how it might work. It would be impossible for me to go into complete detail on this subject in the time allotted to me. I realize many of you have questions and I have reserved some time after this presentation to answer as many questions as I can. Right now, however, I would like to talk with you on the present situation regarding the CEU.

The most significant step taken to date to implement the CEU was the fact that the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools adopted the CEU to measure non-credit educational opportunities offered by colleges and universitites in its 11-state region in December, 1971.

The CEU was adopted by the Association when it revised Standard Nine--Special Activities. The universities and colleges in the southern region are now under accrediting procedures to use the CEU accrediting associations for colleges and universities throughout the Nation are now considering and evaluating the adoption and use of the CEU. Dr. Frank Dickey, Executive Director of the National Commission on Accrediting, has been a member of the National Task Force since 1968.

It is very likely that, as this experience grows, other accrediting agencies will move toward the CEU concept.

Georgia and Virginia both have developed state plans for awarding the CEU and other southern states, including my own state--North Carolina, are in the process of developing state plans.

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The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has developed guidelines for use and implementation of the CEU for institutional membership.

I served on the committee developing these guidelines along with several other institutional representatives from southern colleges and universities. Institutional and program officers of a school or university will find that these guidelines will answer the majority of the questions relating to the use and implementation of the CEU as they pertain to the school or university use and implementation. Colleges and University Registrars will find these guidelines to be of particular use as the standard use of measurement for the individual participant in continuing education and as the accounting unit for an institution's continuing education courses, programs and activities.

In summary, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools presents this handbook of guidelines and other information on the use of the CEU as an administrative tool for use by the 560 member institutions in implementing Standard Nine, entitled Special Activities, of the College Delegate Assembly.

The handbook will state that the guidelines will be considered tentative until further experience is gained by the member institutions through a utilization of the CEU as an instrument of measure for individual recognition and institutional accounting of special activities. The CEU, when combined with the credit units in terms of FTE (full time equivalent), will give more accurate data on the total educational program of the individual use of the CEU, but also the institutional use of the CEU. This approach to the use and implementation of the CEU by the individual institution will tend to clarify many of the questions that are currently being asked and raised about institutional implementation from colleges and universities.

Visitation and accrediting teams from regional accrediting organizations are also beginning to exhibit considerable interest in the CEU and its implications for member institutions. Southern Association teams, in particular, are asking rather specific questions in an effort to evaluate progress being made toward implementing Standard Nine.

These discussions clearly suggest that the new provisions in Standard Nine of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools will be emphasized when the team writes its reports and makes recommendations.

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I would like to turn to the use of the CEU by professional societies and associations, business, industry, labor and government for just a few comments. These are the large potential users of the CEU. The attention, use and implementation of the CEU by the institutions of higher education is only a part of the total attention and consideration being given to the consideration and adoption of the CEU. The National Task Force will be addressing this need along with several other associated problem areas such as quality control of the CEU.

In closing my prepared statement today, and as chairman of the National Task Force on the Development of A Uniform Unit of Measurement for Non-Credit Continuing Education, I nor other members of the committee ever expected such a general acceptance or adoption of the concept developed only six years ago. Our primary objective was to develop a concept of a standard unit of measurement for recognition of the individual who wishes to continue his education beyond that which ended with the awarding of a "credit degree". There was a general concensus of opinion of all representatives of the educational association and proprietary educational interests that this particular need had not been taken care of from an individual recognition point of view and that a concept should be developed for filling this need for 30,000,000 citizens of our Nation who are involved annually in educational pursuits beyond that of the traditional degree or a block of credit courses leading to a terminal cut-off. The concept of the CEU was proposed as a possible answer to this need. Until September 1, 1974, the National Task Force issued only one interim statement on the concept--that was a small leaflet entitled, "The Continuing Education Unit--A Uniform Unit of Measurement for Non-Credit Continuing Education Programs." Due to the rapid rate of adoption, the National Task Force has now issued the National Criteria and Guidelines which should be available later this week. Obviously, the National Task Force cannot develop all of the necessary state plans, institution plans, and handbooks that will be needed if the widespread interests, use, and adoption of the CEU takes place nationally by all producers and user groups of the CEU concept. It becomes a responsibility of all parties offering the CEU and user groups to adhere to the principles of the CEU concept as it is adopted, used, and implemented in the future.

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As it is used, implemented, and further refined, you and your associates can make a valuable input as you are doing here today and tomorrow.

It is anticipated that the CEU will go through a process of development and refinement as its use becomes more widespread.

There are many benefits of the CEU process which are not enumerated here. The CEU is not without some areas of weakness, but I hope you have received a better understanding of the potential of the CEU.

It is obvious that in this day of rapid and massive change, the average individual must continue to learn if he is to remain an effective, efficiently functioning human resource.

It is obvious that we must provide a way that the adult learner can measure and accumulate and be recognized for the wide range of learning, participation and experiences.

The CEU provides a way to do just that.